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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY : Germany (Soviet Zone)

SUBJECT : The Rail Transportation System
in the Soviet Zone of Germany

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1. A very serious situation has developed in the Soviet Zone transportation system because of the shortage of rails. Since the end of World War II, I never saw new rails on any road in the Soviet Zone, although I did quite a bit of professional traveling throughout the Zone. It is known that rails are actually produced at Unterwelborn and Hennigsdorf, Germany, but the production seems to go exclusively to the USSR. Furthermore, the rails which used to make up the second track of the Soviet Zone railroads have all been dismantled, so that there is no longer any road with two tracks in the Soviet Zone except the road from Jueterbog-Halle-Saalfeld to Erfurt. All of the roads that I saw were single-tracked. When the second track for the stretch between Jueterbog and Wittenberg was rebuilt, after it had been previously dismantled, it was made up of old rails which were welded together. The rail situation is so serious that the roads carrying heavy traffic can only be traveled at an average speed of 15-20 miles per hour. The rail foot is weak and therefore the rails cannot carry any great weight. Moreover, the profiles are worn down to such an extent that locomotives with more than 20 tons of axle load cannot be used on any of the rail stretches. In fact the road from Jueterbog to the Anhalter Bahnhof in Berlin, formerly one of the most traveled roads in Germany, is now only a one-track road and can no longer be used by heavy trains.
2. A particularly thorny problem of rail deterioration is offered by the Municipal Railroad of Berlin. This line, which goes in two large rings around the city and connects most of the suburbs with the city, is electrified. The trains used by the municipal system consist alternately of a motor car and a pulled car, in an arrangement such that the first and last cars are always motor cars. Through this arrangement the swinging rhythm of the trains is approximately equal for all cars and thereby wears down the rails at a very fast rate. If the last cars were pulled, the rhythm of the swing would vary from car to car. The equal rhythm

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25X1

has weakened the profiles of the rails which are in very poor condition. It has been estimated that the repairs which would be necessary to restore the rails of the German municipal system would exceed the total production of rail in the Soviet Zone.

25X1

25X1

3. A critical shortage in the railway field also exists in the metals required for the component parts of locomotives.
 - (a) The fire boxes of locomotives are made of copper. The copper boxes did not offer any problem as long as the locomotives were fired with anthracite, but since most of the railroads in the Soviet Zone are now run with soft coal, with the exception of the electric trains, the fire boxes are attacked by the sulphur which is contained in the soft coal, and are worn out quickly. I remember that in the last few months the news was printed in the papers that a locomotive had exploded in the vicinity of Erfurt.
 - (b) A danger which will become increasingly critical is the rapid deterioration of the boiler tubes in locomotives. The boiler tubes corrode very quickly when the water used for the development of the steam is not properly purified. A non-purified water will form a salty sediment on the inside of the tubes. If the salty sediment begins to line the tube, the tube will become too hot and will burst. Therefore, it is necessary to treat the water before it is used, and remove oxygen and carbon from the water. The great expert in the field of the purification of feed water is Dr (fnu) Seip, who has escaped to the Western Zone, leaving a great gap in the Soviet Zone economy.
 - (c) Connecting rods and piston rods are frequently made of poor quality steel and apt to break. They cannot be repaired because metals for their repair are unavailable. The piston rings have poor gliding properties because of the poor material from which they are made, and due to the poor quality of the lubricating oils. Piston rings which are made of cast iron do not have the proper thrust. The thrust should be 80 kg/sq cm, with a friction of less than 0.01. As a consequence of the poor metal and poor lubricating oil, the thrust of the piston rings is considerably lower, at a higher friction rate.
4. In all railway stations one can see partly dismantled locomotives. Some of them are still standing from the time of the war, but most of them have been dismantled since 1945, to help repair the locomotives which are still in use. The station at Merseburg, which is fairly large, has seven locomotives left which are used for all purposes. Compared to the war years, the stations have an average of one-third of their former stock of locomotives. Some of the locomotives which had survived the war were given to the Soviets as a "gift"; others were taken by the Soviets without any formal "presentations". These locomotives have not been replaced. All trains are badly overcrowded. This is not only true of the regular passenger trains which shuttle every day between Leuna and Merseburg and Leuna and Naumburg. The regular arrangement in these trains is that in one compartment eight people are seated and at least eight

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

-3-

people are standing. To illustrate the shortage of locomotives, it should be mentioned that if the local train from Berlin arrives too late at Halle, the train bringing workers to Leuna will be late because the locomotive of the Leuna train has to be held at Halle until the Berlin train has arrived.

5. In order to prevent Soviet Zone passengers from leaving the East Zone trains in the Western Sector of Berlin, the Soviets had a railway line built which avoids the Western Sector completely. This detour line, the construction of which was begun in the winter of 1950-51, originates at Ludwigsfelde and leaves the main line at Grossbeeren. It is a double-track line which leads on to Grunau, where it meets the line connecting Berlin with Silesia. I have never traveled this line myself, but my son told me that the rails of the road are old rails which have been welded together. He also told me that the sand embankments which were put up to carry the rails were already weakened because the line was operated before the sand in the embankment had time to settle. The bridge constructions which span the various rivers and water courses of the new road are not new construction, but have been dismantled from bridges which once accommodated double-track roads before the arrival of the Soviets. The dismantling of bridge spans [] the railway line from Leipzig to Corbetta. In the vicinity of Duerrenberg small water courses which were previously spanned by bridges are now running through culverts which have been bored through the railroad embankment. This situation will be dangerous if the water courses carry flood waters.
- 25X1
- 25X1
6. [] the trains on the new detour line around Berlin were forced to slow down in many places, partly because the earth-work had caved in, partly because the rails are poorly profiled. The loss of time suffered by these slowdowns is so serious that a run from Naumburg to Berlin now takes five hours, while it used to take about 3.5 hours. The run from Naumburg to the Ostbahnhof, which used to take one hour, now takes 2.5 hours. The trains used on this road are motor trains. From my own experience [] on a line which runs from Juterbog to Konigswusterhausen via Zossen. The line is a single-track road and the rail profiles are badly worn. Even a relatively light train has to go at a reduced speed of approximately 20 miles per hour. [] the Soviet Zone rail transportation system would not enable the Soviets to launch an attack through the Soviet Zone of Germany.
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